



# CLIMATE ACTION PARTNERSHIP



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Climate change is not only an environmental challenge but it is the greatest political, social and economic challenge that the world has ever faced. However, it also provides us with the opportunity to work together and take ownership of our actions. We can reduce our production of green house gas emissions and protect the natural resources on which we depend, but this requires an acknowledgement of the link between energy, nature and our climate and actions. It is predicted that South Africa will be one of the countries worst impacted by climate change. The country can expect average temperature increases between 1°C and 3°C by the mid-21st century, accompanied by an up to 30% reduction in rainfall, an increased incidence of droughts, floods and intense storms, and an up to 1 m rise in sea level.

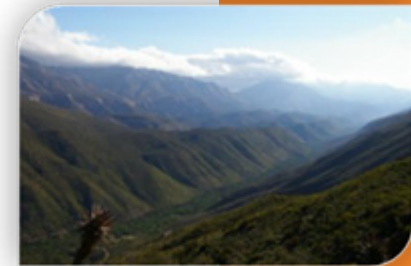
The social, economic and environmental impacts of these changes in South Africa's climate could be immense. Decreasing agricultural, forestry, livestock and fish stock yields could greatly threaten food and job security, while the collapse of South Africa's unique ecosystems could mean extinction for many of the country's magnificent plant and animal species and threaten the lives of us all, as we are directly dependent on natural resources for our survival. Again, we need to use this as an opportunity to act now and support sustainable solutions that reduce our vulnerability and the risks to our climate.

In recognition of this imminent threat and the opportunity it creates, six of South Africa's largest conservation NGOs (CI South Africa, The Endangered Wildlife Trust, The Wilderness Foundation, The Botanical Society of SA, The Wildlife and Environment Society of SA and The Wildlands Conservation Trust) partnered together to form the Climate Action Partnership (CAP). CAP has now been joined by two more partners the World Wildlife Fund (WWF SA) and BirdLife South Africa. CAP is a powerful alliance that aims to slow climate change and increase the resilience of South Africa's biodiversity and communities to the predicted changes. This is done by promoting and implementing the conservation, restoration and maintenance of intact, healthy ecosystems that are connected at a landscape level.

Over the past two years CAP has begun to raise awareness around climate change issues through the media and through the Live Earth Johannesburg concert. We have developed a user-friendly carbon footprint calculator tailored to the South African situation, and have begun engaging with the conservation sector as well as South African businesses and government on climate change and biodiversity issues. CAP also supports a national portfolio of climate mitigation and adaptation projects. These include a major reforestation project in KwaZulu-Natal, the development of a business plan for an aligned restoration project in the Eastern Cape, riverine restoration work in the Karoo and the extension of conservation corridors in KwaZulu-Natal that achieve connectivity across the landscape and allow species to move in response to climate change. CAP also fills the important role of promoting integrity in South African carbon projects by assisting with the adoption of international standards and ensuring that projects have verifiable climate change benefits, as well as biodiversity and community benefits.

CAP believes that in South Africa we need to not only be looking at mitigation but also adaptation, which means coping with the changes that climate change brings and being more resilient to them. Protecting the services and biodiversity provided by healthy ecosystems is a way to build this resilience, while also providing jobs for our communities. CAP is also involved in supporting the enabling environment where we work at the policy level influencing international and national climate change policy and also supporting research as well as communicating our messages to the conservation sector, governments, business and the wider public.

Innovatively, CAP believes that climate change presents an opportunity to steer South African development in a sustainable direction whilst also conserving our natural assets within the ecosystems on which we depend. Through climate change awareness, communities have the opportunity to be educated and assisted in developing sustainable livelihoods. By working together, CAP has the reach and influence to make a difference in South Africa. Let us steer South Africa on a path of sustainable development, one that not only withstands the future effects of climate change, but uses this change as an opportunity for positive development.



For more information please contact:

**Sarshen Marais**  
Climate Action Partnership coordinator  
smarais@conservation.org

Jessica Thorn  
Project Officer  
j.thorn@conservation.org

tel: +27 21 799 8655  
fax: +27 21 762 6838  
Centre for Biodiversity Conservation  
Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens  
Private Bag X7  
Claremont  
7735

Building resilience to climate change